

Epainos Award and Young Regional Scientist Sessions (EAYRS)

The Epainos Award/Young Regional Scientist (EAYRS) Sessions are organised each year at the ERSA Conference, and provide a special platform for paper presentations by young scientists with an in-depth discussion of the papers by senior scholars in the field.

This year there were 32 confirmed entries for the prize. These were all read by the Jury as well as by expert reviewers, each of whom provided a detailed report and evaluation. On the basis of these evaluations an impressively long short list of 9 papers was determined and these were discussed in detail. The Jury was again impressed by the very high standard of the papers this year and we expect that many of these will subsequently be published in high quality journals. However, three papers stood out clearly from the rest and after a further detailed discussion of their respective merits the Jury decided unanimously to award a joint second prize to two of these papers (who will share a prize of €300) and one first prize of €600.

The two papers selected as second prize winners were:

‘Multiple dimensions of regional economic growth: the Brazilian case 1991-2000’ by Guilherme Mendes Resende, PhD candidate in Economic Geography, London School of Economics and Researcher at the Institute of Applied Economic Research, Government of Brazil

‘Agglomeration economics and labour productivity: evidence from longitudinal worker level data for GB Travel-to-Work areas’ by Patricia Melo, Centre for Transport Studies, Imperial College London

The first of these addressed the question of how and why economic growth displays different forms at different spatial scales. This goes back to the Modifiable Areal Unit Problem but sheds new light on a core problem in regional science. The Jury found this an interesting and important paper which was well-motivated and well-presented. It showed some innovation and dealt with the problem thoroughly and effectively.

The second paper by Patricia Melo also deals with a familiar question, that of agglomeration and productivity but by using a very detailed micro data set shed both new light and new evidence on the problem. Not only does this provide clear and substantially different evidence on the magnitude of agglomeration effects, it also shows how these decay quite significantly with distance. This paper again shows an analysis which is both useful and innovative.

Either of these papers would be a worthy winner of the Epainos prize when tested against our criteria; but this year they came up against a paper which the Jury felt just eclipsed them in terms of its innovation and relevance.

This year's Epainos prize goes to the paper:

'Agglomeration and population aging in a two-region model of exogenous growth' by Theresa Grafeneder-Weissteiner of the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration and Klaus Prettnner of the Vienna Institute of Demography and the Vienna University of Technology

This paper provides an innovative theoretical model which combines an NEG model with an overlapping generations demographic model to provide a more dynamic approach allowing for an aging population. This provides some insight into the way such economies may develop and questions the extent to which agglomeration may set in. The Jury felt that this was important and innovative and very well presented. I would like to invite Theresa and Klaus to come forward to receive their first prize of €600 together with the certificate and small memento.

This year's entries show that good regional science is alive and well amongst our younger colleagues. The number of good papers continues to increase, but what the Jury felt they would like to see was perhaps not just the technical competence shown by our three prize winners and indeed by all of our nine short-listed papers, but also some greater risk-taking in innovation. We want to encourage new directions as well as the demonstration of excellence in the application of current methodologies.

The Epainos Jury consists of 6 members. The 2009 Jury was:

- Roger Vickerman (University of Kent, UK) - Chair
- Henri de Groot, (VU Amsterdam, NL) – Secretary
- Jouke van Dijk, University of Groningen (NL) - Editor-in-chief of *Papers in Regional Science* (ex officio)
- Isabelle Thomas, UCL (BE)
- Julie Le Gallo, Université de Franche Comté (F)
- Tadeusz Markowski, University of Lodz (PL) Chair of the Local Organizing Committee (ex officio)